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CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 28, 2015

TO: Chair Cole and members of the Natural Resources Board

FROM: Rob Bohmann, WCC Chair

SUBJECT: Congress Matters: Wisconsin Conservation Congress 2015 Spring Hearing Advisory Questions

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress Executive Council met on January 9-10, 2015 in Rothschild to receive study committee reports and recommendations, review department proposed rule changes, and consider advanced citizen resolutions for possible inclusion in the DNR and WCC Annual Spring Hearing questionnaire.

First, I'd like to recognize and thank Jane Wiley for her presence at the meeting. We would like to acknowledge your continuing interest in our organization and reiterate our appreciation to all the members of the Natural Resources Board for your ongoing support.

Each year, at the January board meeting, the Conservation Congress presents the advisory questions which we have developed for the spring meeting's questionnaire. These questions are the culmination of a year's worth of work by our delegates, our committees, and ultimately by our Executive Council. We would like to thank Tom Hauge, Ron Bruch, Todd Schaller, and their staff members for the time that they all put in to participate in this process.

The Congress Executive Council advanced 41 advisory questions to the annual spring meeting for citizens to weigh in on. You have copies of them all in the green sheet, but I would just like to highlight a few of them for you today.

Our Ag Damage Ad hoc Committee forwarded three questions to gain input from the public on ideas that might improve the state's ag damage program.

The WCC Bear Advisory Committee has two questions pertaining to bear zone C; one related to allowing hunting with dogs and another related to the possibility of an earlier start to the season.

Question 11 asks people if they would favor an extended fisher season and question 21 asks if people would favor opening suitable DOT mitigation lands to nature based outdoor activities (NBOA's).

The Legislative Advisory Committee forward a question to gauge the level of public support for giving wardens the authority to enforce trespass laws related to activities regulated by the DNR while the Migratory Committee is interested in getting input from the public on opening the waterfowl season one half hour before sunrise instead of the current 9:00 am.

The Warm Water Committee forwarded a number of questions including one on reinstating dark house spearing on Wisconsin/Michigan boundary waters. And although wolves have returned to the federal Endangered Species list, we thought it would still be valuable to get the public's input on a possible change to the opening day of the season, in the event that management was returned to the state.